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THE PROPOSED RE-ORGANISATION OF THE INFANTRY, MILITIA, AND VOLUNTEERS.

*By Colonel H. BLUNDELL, C.B. (late Grenadier Guards), M.P.
for the Ince Division of Lancashire.*

THE Secretary of State for War has made some far-reaching proposals as to the organisation of the infantry of the Regular Army, as to the Militia, and as to the Volunteers.

It is important that these proposals should be carefully considered before his scheme is brought forward in a definite form.

Before discussing these proposals it seems desirable to refer to the Report of the Royal Commission which inquired into the "Military Preparations and other Matters Connected with the War in South Africa," and also to the Report of the War Office Reconstruction Committee.

The Report of Lord Elgin's Commission shows that the system existing at the War Office as between the Secretary of State and the Commander-in-Chief was an unsatisfactory one; it shows also that the necessity of having to apply to the Treasury in order to obtain the stores, equipment, etc., *necessary* for an expedition was very embarrassing when an expedition was likely to be sent out; it shows also that military preparations were delayed for political reasons; these reasons may have been very valid ones, and probably were so, but the Report does not show that the Cabinet was aware of the military difficulties which this delay for political causes would entail upon the force employed in the war, especially as regiments could not be raised to their war strength until after the proclamation declaring a state of national danger and calling out the Reserves had been issued; let us see what actually did happen.

On the 29th September, 1899, the Government authorised the despatch of the force to South Africa:—

48,000 men.
11,000 horses.
14,000 mules.
2,650 wagons.
114 guns.

Six battalions had previously been sent from home and the Mediterranean.

October 7th.—25,000 Reservists were called up and required to report themselves by the 18th October.

October 20th.—Embarkation began.

The whole force, except one regiment delayed by sickness of horses, was completely embarked by 17th November.

October 9th.—The ultimatum of the Boers was sent in. Three days later the Boers invaded Natal.

It thus appears that the Boers invaded Natal *six days before our Reservists had to report themselves in England*, and yet the Reservists seem to have been in the proportion of 42 to 56 of the men with the colours who were to form the Army in the field, and some of them must have left the Army for several years.

The British Army thus entered upon the South African campaign at a great disadvantage. The Boers had the advantage of the initiative, and but for the Indian contingent they must have overrun Natal completely.

The Army was hurried out in fragments, and in most of the early engagements of the war the British force was not complete in mounted troops and transport so as to be able to manœuvre freely in a country which probably more than any other required mounted troops and rapid transport.

There is, I submit, nothing in the Report of Lord Elgin's Commission which condemns the Army proper in the sweeping manner in which public opinion has condemned it.

Its strength exceeded expectations. The Reservists came up admirably; over 98 per cent. of Reservists rejoined the colours. The mobilisation worked well; the supply of the Army in the field in food and ammunition was very well carried out.

These matters must be kept in mind, and in any changes which are made care should be taken to retain all that was found useful in our Army while changing what was not useful.

I will now allude to the War Office Reconstruction Committee.

Many statements are made in the Report of the War Office Reconstruction Committee as admitted facts, but which are open to grave question.

For instance, the Report states that the War Office has "for many years been administered from the point of view of peace."

This is an extraordinary statement when you regard the large number of men sent out to South Africa, the smoothness and rapidity with which the mobilisation and embarkation were carried out; and when you consider the admirable way in which this large force was supplied in the field, especially if you contrast the force sent out to South Africa with the small numbers of British troops which fought under Lord Raglan at the Alma—26,000, increased to about 56,000 by the end of the war—and under the Duke of Wellington—probably 35,000—in the Peninsula. The following troops of the Regular Army were employed in South Africa during the war: 256,340.

Also:—

Of Militia, Yeomanry, and Volunteers	
from the United Kingdom - - -	109,048
From oversea colonies, including a few	
Volunteers from India - - -	30,633
Raised in South Africa - - -	50,000 or 60,000

Now the Army was organised to send out about 80,000 men!

Part I., Section I., of the Reconstruction Committee treats of the Defence Committee and the formation of a department.

This department has been approved, and the proposal is decidedly a satisfactory one now that it is understood that the Navy

and Army Intelligence Branches are to retain the custody of their confidential documents.

The proposal that the president of the Committee shall *invariably* be the Prime Minister is, however, questionable. For instance, when the Defence Committee was first formed Lord Salisbury was Foreign Minister as well as Prime Minister, whereas the Duke of Devonshire had presided for a long time upon the "Hartington Commission."

Section II., Part I., of this Committee treats of the formation of the Army Council on the lines of the Admiralty Board.

Though one regrets in some ways the old order of things, experience has shown that under the conditions under which Government is carried on in this country some new system must be tried.

Section III., Part I., treats of the appointment of the "Inspector-General of the Forces."

It is of importance that the position of the Inspector-General should be kept up. He should be regarded as the leading soldier and the representative of the Army. Foreign officers attending manœuvres, etc., should be referred to his office.

This was done in Vienna in 1868 when the Archduke Albrecht occupied the post of Inspector-General of the Austrian Army. General Sir C. Ellice was sent from England to the Austrian manœuvres in that year. He and his staff were presented to the Archduke, who seemed to occupy the position on parade and at the manœuvres held by the General Commanding-in-Chief in England.

Section II., Part II., treats of the distribution of the departments in the Army Council. The military departments seem to be distributed on right lines—mind, men, mechanism, matter. While, however, it is right to regard the Chief of the General Staff as the First Military Member of the Council as holding the most important post, it seems desirable that the military rank formerly held by the Adjutant-General during the tenure of his office should be continued to the present Adjutant-General; military rank is desirable for him as the head of the disciplinary branch, while it is of no consequence to the Chief of the General Staff.

The recommendations of the Committee have been accepted by the Government up to this point, but no information is available as to how far they accept the further views of the Reconstruction Committee which are given in great detail.

Section II., Part II., of Lord Esher's Committee treats of decentralisation.

The decentralisation of stores, wagons, and equipment was commenced many years ago, and is probably complete; such a decentralisation was absolutely necessary, but the localisation of records is quite unimportant. Economy should determine all such matters and will probably be against any such localisation.

It seems very questionable whether it is wise to separate administration from the duties of the general officers commanding-in-chief, though it is certain that generals in command of districts have had too much office work. There is no reason why a general commanding-in-chief in an area should be absorbed in administrative work if he is not required to be so absorbed by the Army Council. On the other hand, the proposal that he shall have a free hand to buy land and build barracks as he pleases (if I understand the recommendation aright) appears to be an extravagant and impossible one, for the Army

Council has to obtain the money from Parliament, and therefore cannot divest itself of the responsibility attaching to the erection of new barracks.

In the words of Lord Elgin's Commission, 282, page 143, decentralisation is "a policy which can only be adopted within certain limits." There seems to be a danger of its being pushed too far.

I will not allude further to the recommendations of Lord Esher's Committee, except to urge that initiative and readiness to take responsibility can only be expected from officers who thoroughly understand the principles of their work, and is not likely to be so much affected as the Committee seems to expect by financial changes.

I will now allude to the proposals of the Secretary of State.

I find it impossible to agree with many of the statements and proposals advanced, but *if* a reduction is required, I think that the reduction of the battalions of infantry selected for reduction is a wise proposal at the present time. It was not always so.

In October, 1815, the Duke of Wellington advised the then Secretary of State for War to keep up the infantry.

(Wellington despatches, Gurwood, 1,000, page 901). He writes:—

"Paris, 23rd October, 1815.

"To Earl Bathurst,—

"My opinion is, that the best troops we have, probably the best troops in the world, are the British infantry, particularly the old infantry that has served in Spain. This is what we ought to keep up, and what I wish above all others to retain.

"The cavalry, that which is the expensive branch of the cavalry—the horses—may be put down in peace, and upon the renewal of war it is more easy to recruit them, or even horses for the artillery, than it is to get together a good body of infantry. For this reason I would recommend to you not to lose your good infantry if you can keep it, and to reform rather the horses of your cavalry and artillery to the utmost and all the expensive parts of your establishments."

But we must recollect that the part which the mounted soldier has to play in modern war is far greater than it was in 1815, and that artillery is more complicated and more effective than it was at that time.

Still, we must not in any way forget the British infantry or do anything to diminish its *quality*. The introduction of a short home service of two years followed by a Reserve service seems also a wise proposal, but not in the manner proposed. This nation is obliged to maintain a large force in India—77,402 men—and a smaller one in the colonies and other places. In order to supply these troops and to relieve them an adequate force must be kept up at home. By this system a battalion is supposed to have a fair proportion of home and foreign service. Most officers will, I think, agree that if the proportion of foreign service preponderates too much the quality of the battalion will deteriorate.

If the battalion deteriorates in quality, its deterioration will affect the Militia and Volunteer regiments to which it sends non-commissioned officers.

If, under the present proposal, three-quarters of the time of the general service battalion will be spent abroad, I think that it will be held that this proportion of foreign service is too great, and that the quality of the battalion will deteriorate.

The home service battalions, as proposed by the Secretary of State, after a few years will be battalions without a nucleus and lacking every element of strength. (See particulars regarding Army Organisation Scheme, page 8.)

The experience of the battalions first formed under Lord Cardwell's system leads one to think that these home battalions, if they are formed, will be found too small for instruction.

It seems certain that if general service battalions took their turn for home service the proportion of home to foreign service battalions would be increased, and the home service battalions would be serviceable battalions, and the quality of the British infantry as a whole would be very much better than by the plan proposed. We must not forget that infantry is an arm in which this country has always excelled.

The organisation of an expeditionary or striking force is distinctly a right one, but considering the larger forces used in even small wars the number proposed is insufficient.

Ten thousand men were sent out to Canada in 1860 when war threatened, and it was thought necessary to strengthen the garrison there. At that time soldiers were enlisted on the ten years' system, and there was no Reserve, but there must have been a not inconsiderable number of men under 20 sent to Canada. In the Indian Mutiny, that campaign which shed such lustre on the British Army, there must equally have been a not inconsiderable number of men under 20.

I do not doubt that the rule forbidding youths under 20 being sent to India in peace time is a right one, but I cannot believe that on a sudden emergency youths under 20 should be sent away from the battalion going "on service"; it may be to a climate as healthy as that of the United Kingdom.

I would urge then that when a battalion has to go on service, any youth who has passed his drill, whom his commanding officer wishes to take, and the medical officer deems fit to go, should go with his battalion.

If we allow ourselves to be fettered by the present arrangement, depend upon it, we shall lose more life than we save.

Why are these restrictions imposed in the case of war?

Lord Raglan, I think, wrote from the Crimea: "Do not send me more boys, they die like flies," or words to that effect, but these boys were enlisted and drilled for six weeks, then sent out in that severe winter before Sebastopol when there was difficulty in getting up provisions from Balaclava, and everything was against them.

Is this restriction to apply to all expeditions? If it is, to whom do we owe this crippling regulation on that subject?

The Secretary of State speaks of the want of employment for men on discharge. The long period required—nine years—for general service prevents a man returning to his occupation or labour before he has lost his aptitude for it. Therefore, some fair certainty of employment on leaving the colours is most desirable. This cannot, I fear, be obtained for the privates in the manner proposed. Possibly men might work at a trade as *part of their duty* while serving. They might, on leaving the Army, be enlisted into some Indian corps, formed

on the lines of the East India Company's force and intended to enable them to eke out a pension by service in India, towards which they voluntarily underwent the required stoppage of pay in aid of the pension; or else in the Garrison Artillery, which ought not to compete with the infantry for the youth of the country.

In Mr. Cardwell's time there had been wars between Prussia and Austria, 1866; and between Germany and France, 1870.

Western Europe was exhausted and sought for no territory outside Europe. All we had to look to was India, and it was thought that railways had diminished the dangers there.

Fear of Russia's advance was called by one Secretary of State "Mervousness," another spoke of large scaled maps, and outside Europe we had no competitors.

There was a great opening for economy; Mr. Cardwell seized it. He amalgamated two single battalion regiments, and made the one at home the *dépôt* of the other; the battalion abroad was good, that at home was on so small an establishment that it was not possible for much instruction to be carried on. There were the recruits, the mess, and the band—little else. Gradually, however, the establishment of the home battalions has been raised till they became serviceable.

Four company *dépôts* such as there were in the Crimean war would have met the case of both battalions of an amalgamated regiment being abroad at the same time.

On the subject of regimental *dépôts* the view generally held 20 or 30 years ago was, that as soon as a soldier was drilled he should be sent to a battalion rather than remain at a *dépôt*. This, I think, must still be so.

The best system at that time was the system of the Brigade of Guards. Recruits were sent to the Recruit Establishment, where there were no private soldiers except those selected for purposes of instruction. When the recruits had finished their drill, they were sent to a battalion. The advantage of this system was, that there was no possibility of an old soldier carelessly or wilfully leading a recruit into trouble, and causing his course of drill to be broken in upon very seriously. This often happened with a battalion, and at a regimental *dépôt*. But I fear that it is not possible to apply this system universally.

The small regimental *dépôts* of the infantry regiments of the Army were supposed to bring the Army in touch with the Auxiliary Forces, and in this they seem to have succeeded. Fault is found with the barracks; now barracks should be light and healthy, but there is a danger in a luxurious age of our going too far in the way of amenities. Money would be far better spent on anything which affects the lot of the soldier *after* his service is over.

I now come to the proposals with regard to the Auxiliary Forces, the Militia and Volunteers.

We must not forget that they are Auxiliary Forces; they are a great potential strength to this country, and suited, I venture to think, to its requirements. Our insular position gives us, alone in Europe, time; a Continental nation if unprepared, may be overrun in a very short time by its neighbour; but as at the commencement of a war our Fleet is sure to be at hand, we have still time to prepare, and then is the time to embody the Militia and to bring our Volunteers into a state to take the field.

As stated on page 9 of the Summary of the Secretary of State's speech:—

"The Army we want is an Army which will enable us to maintain our Empire across the sea in peace and in war, and which will enable us to resist raids at home in the absence of the Fleet."

Our danger is that in the throes of a long war our Fleet may be away, possibly decoyed away as it has been before.

The word "raid," however, must be objected to; it is an indefinite term.

See p. 24 of the Report of Lord Elgin's Commission in a letter dated 21st December, 1898, to Sir William Butler from Headquarters. He was told: "Although an attempt may be made on Kimberley, and the northern strip of Natal may be occupied by the Boers, yet it is considered unlikely that any further advance into the heart of either colony would be undertaken. Raids, however, of 2,000 or 3,000 men may be expected, and it is against such raids that careful preparation on your part is necessary."

We know what happened. The Boers when they came, came in force. Raids on this country, in the absence of the Fleet, composed of a considerable body of infantry, Maxims, pom-poms, and cyclists, with a small proportion of long-range guns, might do great mischief, as is clearly pointed out by the following letters from Field-Marshal the Duke of Wellington. ("Life of Wellington." By the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart., M.P. Volume II., page 359.)

Maxwell's "Life," speaking of the letter to Sir Robert Peel, says:—

"He therefore addressed to Sir Robert a letter which he had at first intended to send to Lord Stanley as War Minister, containing a complete scheme of defence by the land forces, including the organisation of the Militia, and requests that naval officers should be desired to explain what the movements and disposition of the Fleet should be if war broke out. On the precise recommendations made it is unnecessary to dwell at this time; to show the earnestness of the warning, a few passages may be cited."

Letter from the Duke of Wellington:—

"I sincerely wish that I could prevail upon you to consider calmly this great and important subject, compared with which all other interests of the country are mere trifles. All admit the great change made in the system of maritime warfare. Lord Palmerston and you call it a bridge across the Channel between France and this country. I say it is rather a multitude of bridges, from a base in France extending from Bordeaux to Dunkirk. . . . Her Majesty's dominions are in a situation for defence worse than that of the frontier in any State of Europe contiguous to France . . . every port open to attack, for the defence of which we have not one disposable soldier, and we must depend for our safety upon the operation of our fleets. . . . I put the hypothetical case of the enemy landing 25,000 men near one of our great naval arsenals, attacking, succeeding in taking, and destroying the arsenal. This hypothesis is not the representation of an impossibility, or even ex-

travagant, considering what I have seen done myself, having at the time superior armies in the field opposed to me. In this case you would not have a man. . . . If a body of troops were landed in the neighbourhood of one of our places of a sufficient force to invest the place, say 25,000, then I defy all the fleets of England to save it without the assistance of an Army in the field. I entreat you to weigh all this well. . . . I tell you fairly that I consider the danger so certain and so imminent that I conceive, that if there existed an absence of party and prejudice in our Imperial councils, that which ought to be recommended is an alteration in the military policy of the country. . . . It is my duty to tell you all this. I entreat you to investigate the subject maturely—admit nothing as true only because I state it—and then decide whether you will incur the risks of leaving matters as they are. I beg you to believe that, decide what you may, it is my wish and intention to aid and assist the Government in anything upon which you may decide after due examination.”

In a long reply, Peel admitted the truth of the Duke's representations, but the financial difficulty was more immediately present in his mind than in that of the Commander-in-Chief:—

The country is encumbered with a debt of 787 millions. The annual interest of that debt raised by taxation amounts to 28 millions. There has been peace in Europe for the long period of thirty years, and but little progress has been made in the reduction of that debt.”

On the fall of the Peel Administration in 1846, the Duke addressed to Lord John Russell, as head of the new Government, a strong memorandum on the necessity for strengthening the defensive forces. Finally, in 1847, came his famous letter to Sir John Burgoyne, which is too long to insert at length, and, besides, immediately found its way into print, much to its writer's disgust. Nevertheless, of such vital and present importance is the subject to the people of these islands that some of its paragraphs deserve to be quoted once more:—

“You are aware that I have for years been sensible of the alteration produced in maritime warfare and operations by the application of steam to the propelling of ships at sea. This discovery immediately exposed all parts of the coast of those islands which a vessel could approach at all, to be approached at all times of tide, and in all seasons, by vessels so propelled, from all quarters. We are, in fact, assailable, and at least liable to insult, and to have contributions levied upon us, on all parts of our coast—that is, the coast of these [islands], including the Channel Islands, which to this time, from the period of the Norman conquest, have never been successfully invaded. I have in vain endeavoured to awaken the attention of different Administrations to this state of things, as well known to our neighbours (rivals in power, at least, former adversaries and enemies) as it is to ourselves. . . . We hear a great deal of the spirit of

the people of England, for which no man entertains higher respect than I do. But unorganised, undisciplined, without systematic subordination established and well understood, this spirit, opposed to the fire of musketry and canon and to sabres and bayonets of disciplined troops, would only expose those animated by such spirit to confusion and destruction."

Here follows an elaborate plan for reorganising, strengthening, and disposing of the existing defensive forces, after which the Duke proceeds:—

"The measure upon which I have earnestly entreated different Administrations to decide, which is constitutional, and has been invariably adopted in time of peace for the last eighty years, is to raise, embody, organise, and discipline the Militia, of the same numbers for each of the three kingdoms, united as during the late war. This would give a mass of organised force amounting to about 150,000 men, which we might immediately set to work to discipline. This alone would enable us to establish the strength of our Army. This, with an augmentation of the force of the Regular Army, which would not cost £400,000, would put the country on its legs in respect to personal force; and I would engage for its defence, old as I am. But as we stand now, and if it be true that the exertions of the Fleet alone are not sufficient to provide for our defence, we are not safe for a week after the declaration of war.

"I am accustomed to the consideration of these questions, and have examined and reconnoitred, over and over again, the whole coast, from the North Foreland, by Dover, Folkestone, Beachy Head, Brighton, Arundel to Selsey Bill, near Portsmouth, and I say that, excepting immediately under the fire of Dover Castle, there is not a spot on the coast on which infantry might not be thrown on shore, at any time of tide, with any wind, and in any weather, and from which such a body of infantry, so thrown on shore, would not find, within the distance of five miles, a road into the interior of the country, through the cliffs, practicable for the march of a body of troops; that in that space of coast (that is, between North Foreland and Selsey Bill) there are not less than seven small harbours, or mouths of rivers, each without defence, of which an enemy, having landed his infantry on the coast, might take possession, and therein land his cavalry and artillery of all calibre and establish himself and his communications with France. . . .

"The French Army must be much altered indeed since the time at which I was better acquainted with it, if there are not now belonging to it forty *Chefs d'Etat Majors-Generals* capable of sitting down and ordering the march to the coast of 40,000 men, their embarkation, with their horses and artillery, at the several French ports on the coast, their disembarkation at named points, on the

English coasts—that of the artillery and cavalry in named ports or mouths of rivers, and the assembly at named points of the several columns—and the march of each of these from stage to stage to London. Let any man examine our maps and road books, consider the matter, and judge for himself.

“I know no mode of resistance, much less of protection from this danger, excepting by an Army in the field capable of meeting and contending with its formidable enemy, aided by all the means of fortification which experience in war can suggest.

“I shall be deemed foolhardy in engaging for the defence of the Empire with an Army composed of such a force of Militia. I may be so. I confess it, I should infinitely prefer, and should feel more confidence in, an Army of Regular troops. But *I know* that I shall not have these; I may have others; and if an addition is made to the existing Regular Army allotted for home defence of a force which will cost £400,000 a year, there would be a sufficient disciplined force in the field to enable him who should command to defend the country. . . .

“You will see from what I have written that I have contemplated the danger to which you referred. I have done so for years. I have drawn to it the attention of different Administrations at different times. You will see, likewise, that I have considered of the measures of prospective security, and of the mode and cost of the attainment. I have done more. I have looked at and considered these localities in quiet detail, and have made up my mind upon the details of their defence. These are the questions to which my mind has not been unaccustomed. I have considered and provided for the defence—the successful defence—of the frontiers of many countries. . . .

“I quite concur in all your views of the danger of our position and of the magnitude of the stake at issue. I am especially sensible of the certainty of failure if we do not, at an early moment, attend to the measures necessary for our defence, and of the disgrace, the indelible disgrace of such a failure—putting out of view all the other unfortunate consequences, such as the loss of the political and social position of this country among the nations of Europe, of all its allies, in concert with, and in aid of whom, it has, in our own times, contended successfully in arms for its own honour and safety, and the independence and freedom of the world. When did any man hear of the allies of a country unable to defend itself? Views of economy of some, and I admit that the high views of national finance of others, induce them to postpone those measures absolutely necessary for mere defence and safety under existing circumstances, forgetting altogether the common practice of successful Armies in modern times, imposing upon the conquered

enormous pecuniary contributions, as well as other valuable and ornamental property. . . .

"I am bordering upon seventy-seven years of age, passed in honour. I hope that the Almighty may protect me from being the witness of the tragedy which I cannot persuade my contemporaries to take measures to avert.

"Believe me, ever yours sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

To return to the proposals of the Secretary of State for War:—

There is, however, in the preceding paragraph, to the one I have quoted from the Secretary of State's summary, a statement which, I think, must be traversed entirely. He says:—"If we have not command of the sea it will not be necessary for an enemy to land, it can starve us into submission."

Is this so? Can corn be kept out of this country unless America and the countries on the west of Europe were all allied against us and successful at sea? But such an alliance against us may be said to be politically impossible.

I do not underrate the effect of a naval war or of even a single naval reverse upon the cost of bread, and think that in case of a naval war Government should have power to regulate the cost of bread to prevent its undue enhancement by panic and speculation; but this does not alter my contention that you cannot starve this country, except by such an alliance as I have mentioned.

If a large body of troops may, under certain circumstances, make such an attack as the Duke of Wellington indicated, a Regular force ought never to be dispensed with, but that does not affect the great value of the Militia and Volunteers.

The Militia is the old constitutional force of this country, in which every man is liable to serve; the Militia has on many occasions been of great value to the country, and has largely helped to feed the Army with recruits. It has suffered too much by the process, and let us hope that the measures proposed for its amelioration will restore it to its proper position.

The Militia can, I submit, never be done away with in this country as long as we have a Volunteer Army, for many a man makes experience of the Militia before he determines to join the Army. We cannot have general service for the Army until such service is felt to be necessary.

Dry the Channel to-morrow, and it would at once be felt to be necessary; but till that happens there seems no probability of general service in the Army being adopted in time of peace. In a very exhausting war, which we may hope will not happen, this country must study the example of the United States. The Northern States, after incurring enormous expenses in pay, bounty, etc., at the end of the war could not escape compulsion; knowing this, it is to be hoped that, if this country is placed in such a strait, compulsory service will be resorted to before an immense debt is incurred in a vain attempt to avoid compulsion.

One change should undoubtedly be made in the conditions of service of the Militia.

The Militia should be liable in time of war or great emergency to serve throughout the Empire, except perhaps India. If this change was made, the inconvenience of having to ask the Militia to volunteer to serve in the Mediterranean, which experience shows is an obvious duty in time of war, would be avoided.

If our self-governing colonies followed this example, they might, if their Governments decided to do so, send a regiment of Militia to relieve a garrison on an emergency during war. Some years ago many officers thought that the Yeomanry should be done away with, Lord Wolseley was for its retention. The war in South Africa showed clearly that its abolition would have been a great misfortune.

The Secretary of State mentioned some changes in his proposals as to the Volunteers, so that I imagine nothing is absolutely settled as to the Volunteer force.

I think that too much was asked of the Volunteers as to attendance in camp.

Nine days—i.e., a whole week and the end of that proceeding—are enough, and employers would probably see their interest in furthering such a time. Such a time would probably secure the best men, who might be otherwise deterred from joining the Volunteers.

The inspecting officer should inform the commanding officer what he wishes practised, and instruction should be confined almost exclusively to it.

There are regiments, some of them in London, composed largely of clerks in offices, which cannot even give a continuous week, and yet they are very good regiments. Possibly an equivalent to camp service might be given, they might march, for instance, to Hounslow or to some other ground three times in the summer, pitch their camp, and cook, staying there, for instance, Saturday and Sunday nights, and returning on Monday.

A proper standard of physique in the Auxiliary Forces should be enforced, and the strength of these forces must be kept within the necessary financial limits, but neither force can be dispensed with, they are of the greatest value to the country.

The money to be given to rifle clubs is a wise provision.